

We claim:

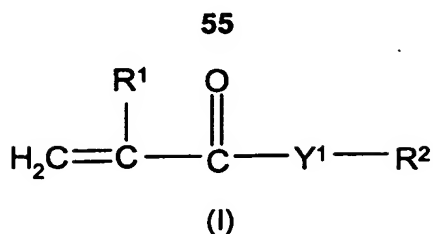
1. A cosmetic or pharmaceutical composition comprising
 - 5 A) at least one water-soluble or water-dispersible polyelectrolyte complex comprising
 - 10 A1) at least one water-soluble or water-dispersible copolymer with cationogenic groups which comprises, in copolymerized form, vinylimidazole and/or a derivative thereof and at least one further monomer copolymerizable therewith, and
 - A2) at least one acid-group-containing polymer,
 - 15 and
 - B) at least one cosmetically acceptable carrier.
2. A composition as claimed in claim 1, where the copolymer A1) comprises
 - 20 a) vinylimidazole and/or a derivative thereof, and
 - b) at least one N-vinyl lactam.
- 25 3. A composition as claimed in claim 2, where the copolymer A1) additionally comprises, in copolymerized form, at least one nonionic water-soluble monomer c) which is different from, and copolymerizable with, components a) and b).
- 30 4. A composition as claimed in claim 3, where monomer c) is chosen from N-vinylamides of saturated C₁-C₈-monocarboxylic acids, primary amides of α,β -ethylenically unsaturated monocarboxylic acids and the N-alkyl and N,N-dialkyl derivatives thereof which, in addition to the carbonyl carbon atom of the amide group, have at most 8 further carbon atoms, esters of α,β -ethylenically unsaturated mono- and dicarboxylic acids with diols, amides of α,β -ethylenically unsaturated mono- and dicarboxylic acids with amino alcohols which have a
35 primary or secondary amino group, polyether acrylates and mixtures thereof.
5. A composition as claimed in any of the preceding claims, where the copolymer A1) comprises, in copolymerized form,
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 - a) vinylimidazole,
 - b) N-vinylpyrrolidone,
 - c) at least one nonionic water-soluble monomer which is chosen from N-vinylamides of saturated C₁-C₈-monocarboxylic acids and primary

amides of α,β -ethylenically unsaturated monocarboxylic acids and N-alkyl and N,N-dialkyl derivatives thereof which, in addition to the carbonyl carbon atom of the amide group, have at most 8 further carbon atoms,

- 5 d) at least one monomer which is chosen from acid salts and quaternization products of vinylimidazole, dimethylaminopropylmethacrylamide and the acid salt and quaternization products of dimethylaminopropylmethacrylamide.
- 10 6. A composition as claimed in any of the preceding claims, where the copolymer A1) comprises, in copolymerized form,
- 15 a) 0.5 to 40% by weight of vinylimidazole and/or a derivative thereof,
b) 20 to 99% by weight of at least one N-vinylactam,
c) 0 to 50% by weight of at least one nonionic water-soluble monomer which is different from, and copolymerizable with, components a) and b), and
d) 0 to 30% by weight of at least one monomer which is chosen from α,β -ethylenically unsaturated water-soluble compounds with cationogenic and/or cationic hydrophilic groups.
- 20 7. A composition as claimed in any of the preceding claims, where the copolymer A1) comprises, in copolymerized form,
- 25 a) 1 to 20% by weight of vinylimidazole and/or a derivative thereof,
b) 20 to 80% by weight of at least one N-vinylactam,
c) 5 to 50% by weight of at least one nonionic water-soluble monomer which is different from, and copolymerizable with, components a) and b), and
d) 0 to 30% by weight of at least one monomer which is chosen from α,β -ethylenically unsaturated water-soluble compounds with cationogenic and/or cationic hydrophilic groups.
- 30 8. A composition as claimed in any of the preceding claims, where the copolymer A1) comprises, in copolymerized form,
- 35 a) 1 to 10% by weight of vinylimidazole and/or a derivative thereof,
b) 30 to 70% by weight of at least one N-vinylactam,
c) 10 to 40% by weight of at least one nonionic water-soluble monomer which is different from, and copolymerizable with, components a) and b), and
d) 1 to 20% by weight of at least one monomer which is chosen from α,β -ethylenically unsaturated water-soluble compounds with cationogenic and/or cationic hydrophilic groups.
- 40 9. A composition as claimed in any of the preceding claims, where component A2) comprises at least one acid-group-containing polymer which comprises, in copolymerized form, at least one monomer which contains a free-radically

polymerizable, α,β -ethylenically unsaturated double bond and at least one anionogenic and/or anionic group per molecule.

- 5 10. A composition as claimed in any of the preceding claims, where component A2) comprises at least one carboxylic-acid-group-containing polyurethane.
11. A composition as claimed in any of the preceding claims, where component B) is chosen from
- 10 i) water,
ii) water-miscible organic solvents, preferably C₂-C₄-alkanols, in particular ethanol
iii) oils, fats, waxes,
15 iv) esters of C₆-C₃₀-monocarboxylic acids with mono-, di or trihydric alcohols which are different from iii),
v) saturated acyclic and cyclic hydrocarbons,
vi) fatty acids
vii) fatty alcohols
20 viii) propellant gases
- and mixtures thereof.
12. A composition as claimed in any of the preceding claims comprising at least one additive different from components A) and B) which is chosen from cosmetically
- 25 active ingredients, emulsifiers, surfactants, preservatives, perfume oils, thickeners, hair polymers, hair and skin conditioners, graft polymers, water-soluble or dispersible silicone-containing polymers, photoprotective agents, bleaches, gel formers, care agents, colorants, tinting agents, tanning agents, dyes, pigments, consistency-imparting agents, humectants, refatting agents,
- 30 collagen, protein hydrolyzates, lipids, antioxidants, antifoams, antistats, emollients and softeners.
13. A composition as claimed in any of the preceding claims in the form of a gel, foam, spray, mousse, ointment, cream, emulsion, suspension, lotion, milk or
- 35 paste.
14. A composition as claimed in any of claims 1 to 13 in the form of a spray, where the carboxylic-acid-group-containing polymer A2) comprises, in copolymerized form,
- 40 i) 60 to 90% by weight of at least one compound of the formula I



in which

R^1 is hydrogen or $\text{C}_1\text{-C}_8\text{-alkyl}$,

Y^1 is O, NH or NR^3 , and

R^2 and R^3 , independently of one another, are $\text{C}_1\text{-C}_{30}\text{-alkyl}$ or $\text{C}_5\text{-C}_8\text{-cycloalkyl}$, where the alkyl groups may be interrupted by up to four nonadjacent heteroatoms or heteroatom-containing groups which are chosen from O, S and NH,

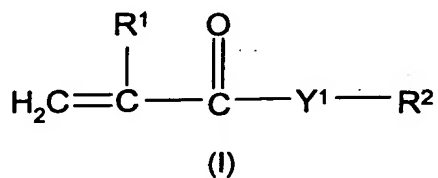
ii) 10 to 25% by weight of acrylic acid and/or methacrylic acid,

iii) 0 to 30% by weight of at least one monomer which is different from, and copolymerizable with, components i) and ii),

or where the carboxylic-acid-group-containing polymer A2) is a polyurethane.

15. A composition as claimed in any of claims 1 to 13 in the form of a mousse, where the carboxylic-acid-group-containing polymer A2) comprises, in copolymerized form,

i) 45 to 85% by weight of at least one compound of the formula I



in which

R^1 is hydrogen or $\text{C}_1\text{-C}_8\text{-alkyl}$,

Y^1 is O, NH or NR^3 , and

R^2 and R^3 , independently of one another, are C_1 - C_{30} -alkyl or C_5 - C_8 -cycloalkyl, where the alkyl groups may be interrupted by up to four nonadjacent heteroatoms or heteroatom-containing groups which are chosen from O, S and NH,

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ii) 20 to 55% by weight of acrylic acid and/or methacrylic acid,

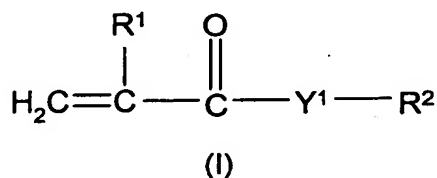
iii) 0 to 30% by weight of at least one monomer which is different from, and copolymerizable with, components i) and ii).

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16. A composition as claimed in any of claims 1 to 13 in the form of a gel, where the carboxylic-acid-group-containing polymer A2) comprises, in copolymerized form,

i) 45 to 85% by weight of at least one compound of the formula I

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in which

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R^1 is hydrogen or C_1 - C_8 -alkyl,

Y^1 is O, NH or NR^3 , and

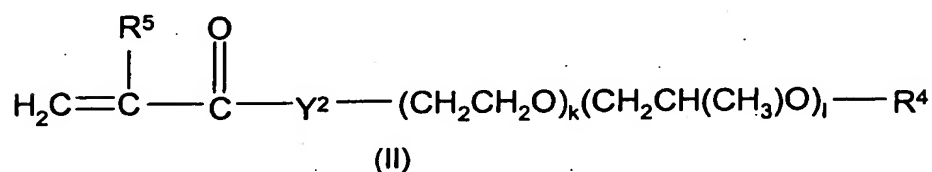
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R^2 and R^3 , independently of one another, are C_1 - C_{30} -alkyl or C_5 - C_8 -cycloalkyl, where the alkyl groups may be interrupted by up to four nonadjacent heteroatoms or heteroatom-containing groups which are chosen from O, S and NH,

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ii) 20 to 60% by weight of acrylic acid and/or methacrylic acid,

iii) 5 to 50% by weight of at least one compound of the formula II



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in which

the order of the alkylene oxide units is arbitrary,

k and l, independently of one another, are an integer from 0 to 1000, where the sum of k and l is at least 5,

5 R⁴ is hydrogen or C₁-C₃₀-alkyl,

 R⁵ is hydrogen or C₁-C₈-alkyl,

10 Y² is O or NR⁶, where R⁶ is hydrogen, C₁-C₃₀-alkyl or C₅-C₈-cycloalkyl,

iv) 0 to 20% by weight of at least one monomer which is different from, and copolymerizable with, components i) to iii), and

15 v) 0.1 to 3% by weight of at least one crosslinking monomer with at least two ethylenically unsaturated, nonconjugated double bonds.

17. A composition as claimed in any of claims 1 to 13 in the form of a gel, where the carboxylic-acid-group-containing polymer A2) comprises, in copolymerized form,

20 i) 90 to 99.9% by weight of acrylic acid and/or methacrylic acid,

ii) 0 to 9.9% by weight of at least one monomer which is different from, and copolymerizable with, component i),

25 iii) 0.1 to 3% by weight of at least one crosslinking monomer with at least two ethylenically unsaturated, nonconjugated double bonds.

18. A composition as claimed in any of the preceding claims, which additionally comprises at least one nonionic thickener.

30 19. The use of a polyelectrolyte complex as defined in any of claims 1 to 10 in skin-cleansing compositions, compositions for the care and protection of the skin, nailcare compositions, preparations for decorative cosmetics and hair-treatment compositions.

35 20. The use as claimed in claim 19 in hair-treatment compositions as setting agents and/or as conditioners.

40 21. The use as claimed in claim 20, where the composition is in the form of a hair gel, shampoo, setting foam, hair tonic, hairspray or hair mousse.

22. The use of a polyelectrolyte complex as defined in any of claims 1 to 10 as auxiliary in pharmacy, preferably as or in (a) coating(s) for solid drug forms, for modifying rheological properties, as surface-active compound, as or in (an)

adhesive(s), and as or in (a) coating(s) for the textile, paper, printing and leather industry.